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24 February 2004
Mr Michael Caulfield
Project Director
The Australians at War Film Archive,
PO Box 2540
Orange NSW 2800

Dear Mr Caulfield,

Thankyou for your letter 9 October 2003. I really enjoyed the experience of recording on video my various war time and other experiences. I was surprised at how much information the skilled interviewers were able to dredge out of my fallible memory.

One of my post Naval activities has been to create a particular ex Naval association, that of Royal Australian Navy Radar and Radio Mechanics. From very modest beginnings 13 years ago, today we have 552 members across Australia and a few in other countries, under the direction of a president and national committee in Adelaide. Approximately 90 members are WW2 veterans.

At a social function which I arranged recently for some of the Sydney members, it struck me that one in particular must be selected by your organisation for interview. His name is Donald John Laffey. Don joined the AMF on 29 May 1941 looking for active service. After 18 months of fighting the Army bureaucracy who wanted to keep him an administrative position, he wangled a discharge on 28 October 1942. The next day, 29 October 1942 he joined the RAN as a Cadet Midshipman. Shortly after, while in the final stages of his qualification for commissioned rank, Don quite literally had a stand up confrontation with his ship the Admiral commanding the area. That ended his aspirations to be a Naval officer. So still keen on active duties, Don was accepted for training as a Naval Radar Mechanic. He was discharged from the Navy on 12 July 1946.

My observations of Don are that he is a highly intelligent, educated and articulate original thinking man, not without a sense of humour, and one who would be an excellent candidate for your program.

I have not made any mention to Don of this contact with you, but will do so if you think it would be a necessary prelude to you making contact with him. Some relevant details are:

Present address, 130 Bobbin Head Road, Turrumurra NSW 2074. Tel 02 9144 4668. From W.W.W.ww2roll.gov.au I have ascertained that his Army O/N was Q102356, and his Navy O/N was 26995.

Sincerely,

George Stevens